

ATLANTIC GUARDIAN

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Newfoundland



IN THIS ISSUE:

VOL. 101, No. 5 MAY 1971

**A DOUBLE TREAT — GREAT STORIES BY
RON POLLETT AND ART SCAMMELL**

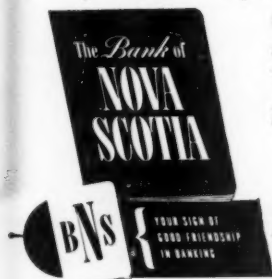
204



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Atlantic Guardian's Platform

- To make Newfoundland better known at home and abroad;
- To promote trade and travel in the island;
- To encourage development of the Island's natural resources;
- To foster good relations between Newfoundland and her neighbors.

Atlantic Guardian

THE MAGAZINE OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Contents

MAY, 1951

Vol. VIII, No. 5

GENERAL ARTICLES

The Bridge	13
By Ron Pollett	
Historic Placentia	22
By Molly Cahill	
Prime Minister for a Night	26
By A. R. Scammell	
The Beaches are Coming to Life	33
By Don W. S. Ryan	
An Artist in Newfoundland	37
By Phil Shackleton	
Catalina	44
By Heber Cole	

NEWFOUNDLANDERS ABROAD

Roma Butler—Singing Star	30
By Adelaide Leitch	

POETRY

Aunt Fanny's Rocking Chair	21
By W. W. Elliott	

DEPARTMENTS

Guardian Angles, by Brian Cahill	3
Guest Editorial, by F. R. Hayward	11

Picture Credits: Page 5—R.C.N.; Page 15—Drawing by Ina Estabrooks; Pages 22, 23, 25—Molly Cahill; Page 30—Adelaide Leitch; Page 33—Don W. S. Ryan; Page 37—Capital Press.

Cover Picture: Artist Frederick Steiger, who was engaged by the Provincial Government to do portraits of all the Speakers of the House of Assembly last year, found time during his stay in Newfoundland to do a fair number of landscape paintings which have attracted wide attention and acclaim in exhibits across Canada. (See story on page 37). Photo by Capital Press, Ottawa.



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by BRIAN CAHILL

● The other night we were sitting in the office of the great metropolitan newspaper for which we toil, pecking out a story of small importance. (It seems that the people who support a certain charitable Home in Montreal re-elected a lady whom we shall call Mrs. Fanny Smooth to the presidency. The only thing that makes the story memorable is that it almost got into print under the headline: Mrs. Fanny Smooth, Heads Home Again) when the News Editor, a very important personage indeed about a newspaper, summoned us to his desk in a fine quaterdeck voice.

Said news editor is pictured herewith just after receiving the news that four reporters had been crushed to death when the wall of a burning factory collapsed.

He comes legitimately by the quaterdeck voice and the uniform in which he is pictured because he served as Commander Peter MacRitchie, R.C.N., during the recent altercations. He will be remembered by many in St. John's where he was

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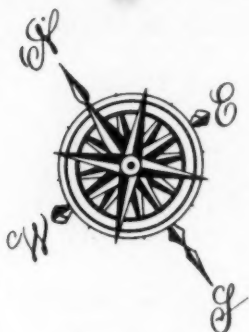


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PETER MacRITCHIE

stationed for some time operating first from the Cochrane Hotel but later spreading terror among sub-lieutenants from Fort William behind the Newfoundland Hotel.

When we arrived trembling at his desk we were relieved to learn that all he wanted was the recipe for making Fish and Brewis.

It seems that the Commander, a noted bon vivant, had been asked to address the Gourmet's Club of Ottawa and was looking for something special to tell them about.

Well we told him how to cook Fish and Brewis and also put in a plug for scrunchins, flippers and bakeapple jam and we understand that he had the gourmets drooling all through his talk.

● We were glad to help the Gourmets of Ottawa become acquainted with Fish and Brewis and other New-

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foundland delicacies because of the heart-rending letters we often get from compatriots abroad who are unable to obtain the delicacy outside the island.

For instance we have a letter from a Newfoundland lady and her husband, an Englishman, who sign the letter J. & D. Davies, 815 Stuart Avenue, Memaroneck, New York. They say:

"Believe it or not we both are able to enjoy a good meal of boiled potatoes, salt cod and scrunchins and this is how it came about. I was passing a small Italian grocery store when lo and behold! I saw a big dried cod in the window. Could hardly believe my eyes but I went in and bought one and some salt pork also.

"Mind you this was the first time I had ever seen salt cod in this part of the world so I was curious to know where he obtained it. The man spoke very little English but . . . he knew it came from Canada to Boston and he called it Baccala.

"My next thought was Baccalieu on the French shore so perhaps years ago a load of our fish had gone to Italy and the people were told it came from Baccalieu, Nfld. At any rate he could not tell me what it meant in English but it was a good dish for the Italians. They soak it 48 hours then bake it and serve it with a tomato sauce. They don't know what they are missing not serving it with scrunchins as we do.

"We sold our house last year and moved into an apartment but nevertheless on Sundays during the cold weather we have our fish breakfast and I often wonder if the people in the other apartments are wondering 'What's cooking?' when they get the smell of the good old cod. We should

ATLANTIC GUARDIAN

worry. My husband says he enjoys it as much as a good steak dinner. Our only regret is when the warm weather sets in the store-keeper doesn't have it on hand."

● We sought the good offices of a fellow-worker of ours named Frank Fuoco—a noted Montreal newspaperman known to the underworld as Fearless Frank and to the chorus girls at the Bellevue as The Noblest Roman of Them All—in the matter of this Baccala—Baccalieu business.

He says that Baccala, pronounced Bac/cal/AH with the accent on the last syllable, is the Italian word for dried cod but not for the cod as it swims about in the water. The word for this latter is Merluzzo, pronounced something like Mer/LUTS/o with the accent in the middle.

There is an older Italian word, Baccello, for dried cod and it is indeed possible that the name Baccalieu has some connection with this word. It seems more likely, however, that Baccalieu Island was so named because Italian fishermen made Baccala or Baccello there rather than that the Italians named the dish after the island.

In other words our island was named for their fish rather than their fish being named for our island.

Perhaps readers can throw some light on the matter.

● Speaking of readers and light on the subject can you stand some more about the Turr and the Murr?


We doubt if we can but we got into this thing even before Gordon Higgins did and we intend to see it through to the bitter end.

Here is a letter from L. Budgell, an official of the Hudson's Bay Com-

MAY, 1951

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pany at Favorable Lake, Ont., who tells us his father was born in Seldom Come By.

"For Heaven's sake," he says, "the Turr is the Razor Billed Auk or Common Murre according to where it is seen; the two birds are very similar and are sometimes called Tinkers and Turrs respectively; in some places they are both known as Turrs.

"Dear Mr. Funnyman:"—

During the past five years many letters have been received at A. G.'s offices addressd as above—all intended, of course, for Brian Cahill, author of the popular "Guardian Angles" column. A valued staff writer of the Montreal Gazette, Brian has often burned the midnight oil to give A. G. readers a regular monthly diet of tidbits and chuckles. Now that Atlantic Guardian is in the process of moving back to Newfoundland—back home—contributions to Guardian Angles should be addressed to Brian Cahill in care of our new Montreal office—1500 St. Catherine Street West.

"These birds breed mainly in very large colonies in Hudson's Straits, a few breed on rocky islands on the Labrador Coast . . . the main breeding grounds in Hudson's Straits are on Digge's Island, Cape Wolstenholme and Akpatok Island, (Akpatok is the Eskimo name for these birds). There are lesser rookeries on Mansel Island, Sailsbury Island and Coates Island.

" . . . On the Labrador and Newfoundland coast the birds feed on

ATLANTIC GUARDIAN

shell fish to some extent and in certain localities can be very good to eat. In the straits . . . they have a strong fishy taste and are very thin.

"Once while windbound I ate Murrs exclusively for a few days and they are not like olives. I don't think anyone except an Eskimo would acquire a taste for them."

● A couple or two short items to end with.

F. C. Moore, executive secretary of the Morgan Memorial, a charitable foundation of Boston, Mass., tells us how much he likes the magazine. He is a former Newfoundlander who has been connected with the work of the widely-known institution for 50 years.

Robin T. Smith of 4251 Marcell Avenue, Montreal, tells us that as a small boy he used to go to a private school run by a Mrs. Pinsent who later became a missionary in Korea. He says Mrs. Clara Jean Hay (nee Clara Jean Stein of Kennas Hill), from whom a letter appeared in this space some time ago, used to take him to school by the hand. He remembers the names of Monroe Bishop, Marjorie Barr, Alex Duncan, Fritz Burchill as contemporaries also and wonders where they and others whose names are "lost in the mists of antiquity" are today.

And R. Morris of 385 Charron Street, Montreal, says he likes all our writers but "If Ron Pollett seems a little deeper in my heart perhaps it is because we are both from Trinity Bay".

Brian Cabell

MAY, 1951



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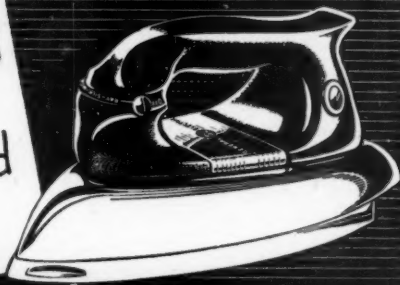


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GUEST EDITORIAL

"MORE DANGER FROM FIRE THAN EVER"

THE fire hazard in Newfoundland has increased to an alarming extent, as a result of the construction of roads and the increase in population in and near the forest." So states Albert Martin, Chairman of the Newfoundland Forest Protection Association, in his special report to the annual meeting this year.

He goes on to say, "I feel that we are not sufficiently alive to the great danger that confronts us as

by F. R. HAYWARD:
Honorary Secretary,
Newfoundland Forest Protection
Association

the country opens and modern transportation develops. With this in mind, and with the advice of those who are working with us in the protection of our forests, we are recommending to all citizens that during the months of June, July and August when the Forest Protection Association or the Department of Natural Resources announces that the fire hazard is high, that no fires be lighted by people visiting the woods."

Our Association is aware of this grave danger and is already mak-



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ing plans to meet the increased needs in forest fire prevention and suppression. As members of our Association, we have the Department of Natural Resources, the two Paper Companies, the Canadian National Railways, and we also receive contributions from the Horwood Lumber Company, Buchans Mining Company, and Dominion Wabana Ore Limited. We have already received assistance from the Forestry Branch of the Federal Government, in advice and in forestry research.

We are recommending that a system of travel permits be started as soon as the method of application can be worked out, and we sincerely hope to have this in effective operation by the fire season of 1952. We are also asking the Provincial Government to make the amendments to the Forest Fires Act which the anticipated increased travel by the public in the forests indicate as being desirable. We feel sure of their active co-operation in doing this.

We are not ashamed of our past record in the protection of Newfoundland's forests against loss by fire, and we can report with a great deal of satisfaction that neither in 1949 nor in 1950 did any major fires originate from the railways or roads patrolled by this Association. However, some large fires did occur in 1950, and one of the largest of these, without doubt, started from a camp fire set by a careless person. The map reproduced here shows where this first burnt, and that it spread to cover 12 miles and threatened many settlements in Notre Dame Bay. We hope such fires will be fewer in the future.

The Bridge

by RON POLLETT

THERE never was a Newfoundland outpost yet that didn't have a spot or spots dear to the hearts of its children. Such a playground could be a few yards of sandy beach banked by wide flat rocks washed clean and smooth in the lun of a cliff that echoes the hearty laughter—a perfect place in which to shout, squat, paddle, and swim. It could also be a blackberry clearing on the heights from which to watch the train or steamer smoke curling beyond the far hills 'way out in the world and to see the boats and schooners sailing in and out of the harbor; or maybe a sheltered patch of greensward where to play marbles, leap-frog, bat-and-cat, kick the ball, or just run and jump. Or it might be a long wharf stretching into the clear water teeming with tomcods, cunners, sea trout and other kinds of angle fish all hungry for bait; or perhaps only a gravel swatch in front of the village shop, a nice place to rompse and dance and play the mouth organ and dream over the gumdrops and bullseyes in the shop window. There never was an outpost yet that didn't have some such playground its children would always remember.

The spot that took the cake in my young life and enriched my memory ever since was somewhat different from any of these in that it had practically all of them roll-

ed into one. It was the kind of place you could talk about for hours and yet not be able to tell half the fine things that happened there. It was the village bridge in our place in Trinity Bay, and the time was early in the century.

Our bridge was not just one of these culverts you could paddle over with a bough or wade under with your pants legs tucked up and hardly worth mentioning; it was as good as they come, a regular bridge a bunch of boys could get their teeth in—a whopper over a hundred feet long. It had two openings for fishing skiffs to pass underneath and the tide through these holes boiled up something fearful in the spring floods. It was railed on either side from end to end by a chest-high catwalk as wide again as the taps of your boots in case anyone wanted to climb up and measure it—which was exactly what most of us did do and more than once. In fact, a boy was counted nothing but a coward until he could cross at least part way teetering on the catwalk with his heart in his mouth, but the fellow was never born who could tackle the railing over the tide.

This bridge was part of the main road that circled our harbor and it spanned the water where the handle joined the pan. That is, the harbor was shaped like a frying pan with a short handle and the bridge saved walking

around the handle where there was no road anyway. The handle was a half-mile tongue of salt water sticking out of the bottom end and licking into a river cascading out of the woods. The river was what made the rushing tide under the bridge.

The Tongue, as we called it, was not over-wide, but any boy who could skid a rock from beach to beach was no baby and the one who could swim across the deepish channel was counted a man. The shores had some wharves and stages but not enough to write home about, though there were quite a few houses and gardens on the slopes among the trees. Altogether, enough children lived in and around the Tongue to keep the bridge from getting lonesome even if it was never used, as it was, by every one of the six hundred souls from both sides of the harbor and by visitors who had to cross it cruising up and down the shore.

In fact, anyone who stirred at all had to cross that bridge or sail under it. It was the Broadway, the Piccadilly of our place. The housewives from the Tongue crossed it to borrow a bun of loaf, the grannywoman crossed it, the mailman, the minister, the teachers, the magistrate, the merchants, all the horses and carts and fine carriages, the truckle-mucks, wheelbarrows, and bikes. The Salvation Army crossed it marching around the harbor and so did the parading fraternal societies in full regalia headed by the band. Strapping young fishermen in leg boots crossed it, and stooped, bearded octogenarians

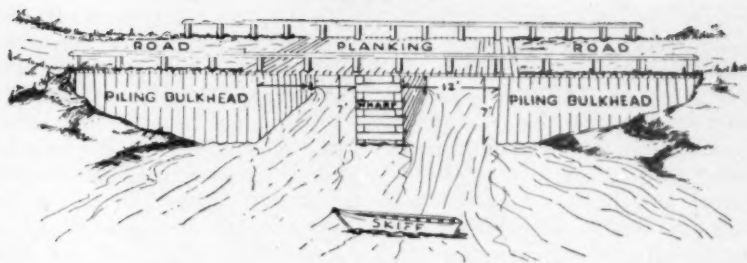
with canes. Lovers crossed it to get on the lonely back roads, oldsters bent on piccadillos, the gossips, the peeping toms. Sheep, goats, cows, cats, and dogs crossed it and so did weddings and funerals.

These were some of the people and things that used the bridge for business. The ones who used it for pleasure—stopped there and lingered and loafed and practically lived on it—were we youngsters. The spot offered just about everything a boy needed to have fun with from the time he let go of his mother's breast until he finally crossed the water with his bride. And ever after, it was a fine place to sit around home and recall.

The bridge was a rustic affair but as strong as a rock. It had to be solid to withstand the tides pushing the one side and the big waves hammering the other. The pile-driven bulkheads were ballasted with barrel-size boulders packed tight with gravel, except that the center wharf between the boat holes was cross piling widely creviced and with no fill-in around the anchor rocks. The real bridge part, the planking, extended only over the forty feet of water and wharf in the middle; the rest of the bridge was gravel, like the road. It was the planked strip that got most of our shoe leather through the years.

HERE we were in the middle of everything, including the bridge. We could look out over the harbor, look back at the Tongue, sweep both sides of the village

THE BRIDGE (TONGUE-SIDE VIEW)



with our gaze, and see everyone who passed by. But what we did mostly was look into the water—at the trout.

We fished here from spring thaw till fall freeze. We lived with the worm cans from sun-up till school time, during the noon recess, and after school until sunset. Besides the trout, we caught salmon peels, billfish, tomcods, flatfish, tansies, and whatever else took hold of the hook. In the summer holidays we fished the daylight away, then returned to the bridge at night to catch eels. The only time we left the spot was to course the streams and ponds for the red-bellied brook trout as a change of color from the speckled beauties on the bridge, and to swim in the Tongue or sail in the punts on the harbor.

All summer long we boys trailed home to supper lugging fish, our hands slubby and trout blood under the nails, and then in the morning could hardly wait for breakfast before grabbing the fish pole and rushing to the bridge to start all over again. The toughest days of our whole life were the Sabbath, which we had to observe in strict biblical fashion. Of

course it never failed that the biggest trout ever to come near the bridge picked out a Sunday afternoon when all we dared do was measure them with pop eyes as they skunned and breached under our noses. We wore out our fingers pointing at them—and on Monday they were gone.

I was one of the boys lucky enough to have to cross the bridge to get to school. About half of the hundred children then banging away at the Royal Readers had to cross with me, so I wasn't lonesome. Here the bunch of us would dilly-dally, waiting for the boats belonging to the Tongue to come in from the fishing grounds and pass through the holes.

Sometimes the punts would make a match of it, to see who could be first under the bridge, and we were loud with cheers for the winner. But we kept an eye peeled particularly for Old Tom, alone in his rodney, who gave us a real thrill. Tom was either absent-minded or so intent on sculling against the tide he often forgot to take the sail mast down and crash-banged it into the bridge. Even when we hollered "The mast, Tom! The mast!" he

waited till the last second and our suspense was awful. I often thought the old man was playing, just to entertain us, because the times he did crash he flung his cap into the standing room and stamped on it as if for spite though the mast was damaged hardly at all.

Even without Old Tom and the others I would still have had plenty of company crossing the bridge. In my book-bag through the years I carried a storehouse of characters and things to ponder, such as the wonderful pudding, the little wagon wheel and the big wagon wheel, the dog and the shadow, the subterranean barber, the spider and the fly, the Hesperus, King Bruce, the Inchcape Rock, not to mention Lucy Gray and Horatius who had bridges of their own. One thing I often considered was that poor Lucy would have fared better with our bridge, because if she missed it in the snowstorm she would merely have walked out on the solid ice instead of into the swirling deep.

Anyway, that's what we children did all winter—walk across on the ice for a change — fair weather or foul. But the bridge was useful still. There was always skating on the Tongue and harbor, of course, but the big adventure was scooting through the boatways where the ice was sometimes thin and buckly from the strong current. Fellows came from all over to meet the challenge, and the wonder was no one ever broke through and got swept away. When you got to be swift enough skater to tackle the bridge you were in the upper classes with

those who could catwalk or swim across the Tongue.

But the planking itself was not deserted entirely, even when the wintry winds shrilled through the timber and wharf crevices and moaned along the desolate railings. It did see and hear us a lot after supper on moonlight nights, of which there seemed to be many, when we sledded on a nearby hill and stopped the slide dead in the middle which usually was free of snow, making a fine brake. I recall this windy bare stretch was hard on the horses hauling firewood, but they strained and pooped over it somehow. Meantime, the iron spikes in the planking got rasped shiny from contact with the steel slide-runners, and sparks flow out of the horses' toes.

Also, the planking was the first spot in the village to lose every trace of winter came the spring sun, and the few starved tree-birds flocked there to peck into the wood. They pitched on the railing first, then hopped furtively to the middle walk which was a solid strip of thick boards three feet wide running lengthwise on the cross planks. The birds dug into the dents left by the horse shoes and were rewarded with morsels of oat droppings snuggled there like worms. There were no rocks handy we could sling at them, and you can't hit a bird with a snowball.

The thaw loosed new life for us too, to liven up the route to school. This was the fun of pan hopping, leaping the ballycatters. These ice floes, floating near the beaches, furnished substantial rafts on which we could pole a



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nice ride in the shallows near the bridge. "Jumping pans" this game was called and it was ticklish business. Drenched to the waist many of us continued on to school rather than take the lacing we knew was waiting at home. The teachers seemed to understand what we were up against and let us dry out by the fire.

IT WAS some weeks after ice-out before the bridge rails were again decorated with fish poles for another long season. The trout took plenty of time adjusting themselves to the salt water after leaving the river. But we boys couldn't wait and hurried to greet them with fat spring worms at the estuary and along the Tongue. Here we could also be on hand not to miss the punt launchings—those of the old boats stored under the fish flakes for the winter and the new ones out of the docks.

Children from everywhere came to the Tongue to get a ride in a new boat sliding down the ways. The ride was no swifter than in an old punt but there was something of a ceremony about a new one, spic and span. Men from all over the harbor likewise gathered for the christenings, to eye the winter job as it slid into the water, and were only too happy to lift even the toddlers aboard to add their small voices to the shouts.

Naturally, these launchings were duck soup for us whipper-snappers. We'd fight, if we had to, to be the first to sail a new skiff through the bridge, and back again rowing and sculling against the tide. But the owners seemed

only too willing to let us do the work. Meantime the builder and his cronies beamed and nodded from the railing while others cocked a critical eye in unbiased appraisal of the boat. All we did was bend to the oars.

We took turns breaking our backs sculling, and we made a fine game out of it too. One boy, a weak one, could make only a "rim" with the prow through the water; another might be strong enough to make bubbles; and a muscled boy could make foam. Sometimes the current was so swift it was nip and tuck whether we'd get back, even with the whole crew pumping together at the oars. But we'd had plenty of practice over the years taking punts to collar in the security of the Tongue where it broadened to lap up the river—and we also had a "Row, m' hearties!" sing-song to give us strength.

The singing was real fun and it was marvelous what iron it put into our arms. The "Heave-ho!" chants also came in handy at beaching time in the fall when we dragged the boats over dry land to winter storage. For that matter, we boys were only too eager to pitch in and push at whatever engineering feat there was that needed singing, from moving a house body and bones across the harbor over the ice to hauling a cow out of the bog. But bucking the spring tides through the bridge holes in a new punt somehow got to be the cream of the crop—for which we would even drop our trout poles to work like slaves.

Other spring activities near the bridge included the beaver job of

rebuilding causeways running a few feet from the beach out to our favorite trout rocks. These flat-stone bridges usually were carried off by the ice drift every year, but the solid rock itself of course remained anchored for eternity. That is, all but the biggest one did—it would take twenty men to lift it—and it disappeared mysteriously one spring. This perch, well out from the beach, we and our fathers before us knew as Jonathan's Rock, named after a man living nearby who spent most of his eighty-odd years fishing from it. One winter the old man died, and after ice-out there was nothing but clear water where the rock had been. A lot of people shook their heads over that.

Come summer, the tide under the bridge got so lazy at high water we could swim the passage-ways and climb into the wharf. This was before bathing suits were invented and we had to hide under the bridge anyway when people were passing and many of us even undressed among the boulders in the center pile and dropped from the wharf like monkeys out of a tree. We were graduated into this deep water from the regular swimming hole up in the Tongue. Once a boy attained the bridge he was ready to tackle any depth—and he lost no time proving it by diving from a boat in the deep, deep harbor.

The bridge had other summer attractions for us bounders besides fishing and swimming, and like everything else we did, the most action was pivoted around the wharf. Here we could hide among the ballast rocks and play

mischief through the chinks in the timber overhead. One of the more interesting pastimes was pushing a barrel stave through a slit to trip the unwary passer-by, and for this we took turns under and on the bridge so everyone could get his share of the fun.

One group would line the railing and signal the stavemen as to what chink the innocent on-comer was headed for and at a split second the stave would pop up to stub the toe of the victim. Naturally, he or she would stop and look with big eyes—and see nothing at all! When he started off again, scratching his head in puzzlement, we'd catch him the second time if we were lucky and leave him flabbergasted altogether while the onlookers almost busted trying not to laugh and give the game away.

The double-planked midsection also made a handy shelter in the rain squalls where we could hole up like goats. But it was no fun being trapped in the wharf when a four-wheel horse cart thundered overhead and unloosed a shower of dust and splinters. Also, there were some rascals who took delight in upsetting a full can of fish bait through the chinks when least expected and some of us would wind up with worms in our pants.

The planked section remained our favorite spot even after we outgrew the crawl holes in the piling. As striplings we turned it into a dance floor for the long summer evenings, when the bridge resounded with mouth organs and accordions. Many a fine amateur step-dancer was born on this bridge, and embryonic

Bing Crosbys and Bob Hopes flourished at our impromptu concerts by the light of the moon. Saturday nights particularly, when young bloods from neighboring villages came a-courting in our place and established a rendezvous along the railings, the timbers trembled with gusto as the visitors added their songs and dances to our own.

BUT Sunday afternoons saw the biggest crowds. This was not only the weekly rest spell but also march time for the Salvation Army, and on a sunny day the railing was jam-packed with sightseers viewing the parade. The big doings were heralded by the sound of drums like tom-toms booming over the back hills as the parade got under way at the Barracks a distance up the road. The cornet and trombone, which was all the band the Army had, usually saved their wind until in sight of the bridge, then struck up a fanfare that lasted all the way across the planking which was still warm from the jiggling and dancing of the night before.

The Salvationists halted at the far end and formed a circle around their flag to hold a prayer meeting in a clearing overlooking the sea. It was the best place in the harbor to sing "Pull for the shore, sailors, pull for the shore . . ." and the Army sang it every Sunday. As if by cue, the loafers trooped in off the water to make a fringe around the group. Once the crew was assembled, the officers led with other songs, knuckling their tamborines loudly on clenched fists:

I'm glad I'm a Salvation soldier,
To my colors I'll stand firm and true:
The flag with the star in the center,
The yellow, the red, and the blue.

As a small boy I was fascinated by the big flag and by the jingle and flash of the tamborines. Later I shifted my allegiance to the lassies who wielded them—usually the daughters of the officers and every one of them as pretty as a picture in her bonnet and bows. Like all the children who grew up on our bridge, I learned many of the spirited songs and hymns of the Army, which have enriched my memory ever since.

Of course other parades over the bridge, like the big ones of the Sunday School and fraternal societies, had more feet, but these were only annual affairs. But of all the "marches", the ones that splintered the timbers were the stampedes of wild horses. These events happened maybe twice a week and really clearly the decks so far as we youngsters playing there were concerned.

These were the local horses let out to graze all summer, and the freedom put wind in their tails. They and their bold flighty buddies from up and down the shore bunched in our place because of the lush feeding, and when they wanted to cross the bridge back and forth to the different grasslands, they ganged up and charged like the Light Brigade. We small boys trapped on the planking either ducked into the wharf or hung quailing to the outside of the railing as the cav-

(Continued on page 34)

Aunt Fanny's Rocking Chair

In eighteen hundred and ninety
two

In the good old days gone by
My old Aunt Fanny had a chair,
A pleasure to the eye.

With her demise to our surprise
The will was read quite clear,
And my Dad was the lucky lad
To get that rocking chair.

We brought it home and set it
down
In the kitchen by the stove,
And since that time it's rocked
most kids
From Lawn to Coachman's Cove.

On Sunday nights in winter time
When the folks would go to
"prayers",
We would rock the kids to close
their lids
And bundle them off upstairs.

In our mad career to and fro,
The chair on its beam ends,
We'd sing "Hallelujah Hi De Ho"
'Till the old roof creaks and bends.

The backward, forward backward
swoop,
Not unlike in a swing,
Would make the old chair "loop
the loop",
Our songs the welkin ring.

The chair was made of larch and
birch
With here and there some pine,
Some nails left over from the
church
And of hatchet and saw design.

The upholstered seat was quite a
treat
'Twas stuffed with rabbit skins,
And Aunt Fanny's choice piece of
cretonne
Covered a multitude of sins.

Down through the sad and happy
years
It stood the test of time,

MAY, 1951

Sharing our sorrows, joys and
fears,
This rocking chair sublime.

Our kids grew up and travelled
far
Some live 'neath foreign skies,
But Aunt Fanny's good old rock-
ing chair
Kept rocking girls and boys.

The sands of time dripped slowly
down,
The chair went on its way,
My father gave it to a man
Belonging to Birchy Bay.

From there it went to Comfort
Cove
To placate people's whims,
And there it had to change its rock
To suit Salvation Hymns.

Aunt Fanny had a secret place
To hide her worldly gold,
Which did remain throughout her
life
A secret never told.

A Methodist of the staunchest
kind
The chair had always been,
But rocking to Salvation Hymns
It smashed in smithereens.

And there it lay upon the floor
A wreckage to behold,
When the rabbit skins they fell
apart
Out popped Aunt Fanny's Gold.

It was not much you may depend,
Just sovereigns two or three,
About enough for 'Lijah Cuff
To go and have a Spree.

The chair is gone, Aunt Fanny too
But the rockers still remain,
And they're fastened to a cradle
now
For the kids in Harbor Main.

W. W. ELLIOTT,
St. John's.



HISTORIC PLACENTIA

by MOLLY CAHILL

PLACENTIA is a town about eighty-four miles from St. John's. It is beautifully located amid sheltering hills and placid waters.

We have to go back as far as 1660 to find that when France was the greatest European power in the New World, Newfoundland was part of her vast territory and Placentia was the French Capital of the island.

The French made good use of Placentia in the fishing trade—and no wonder, as it is situated on a magnificent bay 90 miles deep and 60 miles wide at the mouth that is studded with hundreds of islands and teeming with fish—it is a fine port easily fortified and has

a beach capable of drying the fish of a thousand ships. Its natural beauties, fine climate and picturesque scenery entitled it to that name given it by the French—Plaisance or pleasant place.

Many are the interesting records of the French occupation of Placentia. One in particular dealing with the early history of nearby Point Verde is an old French brevet, signed by Louis XIV, the then King of France, and countersigned by his Prime Minister, Phelypeaux. This brevet granted to Le Sieur de Costabella the ownership of the peninsula of Point Verde, a short distance from Fort Louis on Castle Hill. The date of the brevet is 1709 and it was written in the Basque lan-

guage. The late Archbishop Howley of St. John's translated this document into English and it now hangs on the parlor wall of a descendant of the Green family, whose forebears acquired the land.

Two great nations France and England carried on a continuous petty warfare and skirmishes amongst the people for two hundred years using mostly Placentia for defence or attack. Fort Louis, Fort Frederick, Point Meadow, Daffy, Dicksons Hill and the old Franciscan church site today showing old French and English cannon and Basque and Latin headstones.

Tombstone Dated 1676

The oldest tombstone to be seen

has the date May 1, 1676, and the name on the stone is Dehemer Hilaire. Other words such as "Canus de Tale le Araus" and "Nenego Semea" are to be seen and have been pronounced by an expert of the British museum to be in the Basque language.

Placentia has a lot in common with the city of Quebec. In 1674 Newfoundland was included in the diocese of Quebec as were all the French possessions in North America. In the archiepiscopal archives of Quebec are to be found some curious documents relative to religion in Newfoundland, the visit of Monseigneur de St. Vallier and the establishment of the Franciscans at Placentia. Rev. Dr. James Louis O'Donald was or-

An aerial view of Placentia showing The Gut and inner Arms



dained Bishop at Quebec and was sent to Montreal, the Island of Placentia and St. Peters.

The first French governor of Placentia was Gargot. He was succeeded by De La Poyoe and then by the Marquis de Frontenace, later viceroy of New France. In 1688, when war broke out between Louis XIV and James II of England, Frontenace had the forts at Placentia rebuilt and garrisoned by troops from Acadia.

When the French gave up Placentia by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713 many of the French settlers remained but were under the government of Nova Scotia until 1729 when the first Governor, Capt. Osbourn R.N., arrived and took over the jurisdiction.

Placentia was the scene of great historical events and the home of great historical personages, not the least of whom was Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence, who later ascended the throne as William IV. The Prince was a very high spirited young man full of daring and adventure who, history relates, did not in any way help to improve the warring conditions of the people. Most of his time was spent at Placentia in his ship the H.M.S. Pegasus and legend has it that he enjoyed his stay there very much.

He ordered the building of the Church of England at Placentia in

the year 1787 and contributed handsomely to its erection. The site he chose was where the convent of the religious recollects of the order of St. Francis was established by Bishop de St. Vallier of Quebec who received the royal sanction and license for same from King Louis XIV in the year 1692.

The Prince also furnished the five piece silver Communion Service inscribed as follows: "Given by His Royal Highness, Prince William Henry to the Protestant chapel at Placentia, Newfoundland 1787." Also he presented a scroll bearing the original hano-ovarian cost of arms which is said to be the only one in North America. Tourists and writers who come to Placentia to see these relics find them well preserved in the Protestant chapel just down the road beyond the grassy lane.

Indeed Placentia has the historic value and the scenic beauty to make it one of the first places marked for a big tourist trade. A properly organized museum and restoration historic sites would attract thousands to Placentia every summer.

The Jersey Side and Argentinia are separated from the Town Side of Placentia by a narrow channel of water through which the salmon from the bay enter the North and South East pools. The fishing

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is good especially at the South East pools where St. John's tourists have built up a fairly good settlement.

Placentia had a shot at the mining industry also. In the year 1883 an American from Colorado, Mr. Stephen Pickard, was engaged there superintending the development of an English Mining property. Also a Mr. Verran from Wales, who was well versed in the science of the earth's structure, took claims now known as Verran's Island. Sliver Cliff at Argientia was widely known in this century and was operated with some success.

There are bright hopes that Placentia will come into her own through confederation with Canada and through Newfoundland having such a far seeing Premier as J. R. Smallwood. The fishery industry is certainly becoming wide open for re-establishment and the historic value and scenic beauties of Placentia assure us of a big part in the tourist trade.



Above, a view of Placentia from Jersey Side showing vessels at anchor in South East Arm. Lower picture shows the plaque presented to the Protestant chapel at Placentia by King William IV in 1787. Also given to Placentia by the then Prince William Henry was a five piece silver Communion Service.

Prime Minister for a Night

by A. R. SCAMMELL

I WAS teaching in a small out-
port in Newfoundland about 20
years ago when I was suddenly
catapulted into politics. There
was an Orange Lodge in the place
and thinking that by joining I
could enter more fully into the
social life of the community I sent
in my name to become a member.
I joined.

One winter night after we had
finished our business we were all
racking our brains for something
to enliven the proceedings. In an
unguarded moment I suggested
that we hold a Mock Parliament.
At that time political interest was
very keen and everybody from
the Master of the Lodge to the
tyler instantly showed great en-
thusiasm for the idea. We had a
good crowd there that night and
prospects of a ready-made politi-
cal career without the bug-bear of
elections seized all our imagina-
tions. Nobody knew the first
thing about it including myself
but being Newfoundlanders im-
provisation was our second name.
Never in the political annals of
our country or of any other coun-
try, including France, was there a
government formed in such a
hurry, or with more disregard for
parliamentary protocol.

The Tories were in power at
that time so I was elected Tory
Prime Minister by everybody in-
cluding the potential opposition
and given ten minutes to form a
cabinet. The Customs Officer, a
man of lion courage, boldly risk-

ed his job by agreeing to be leader
of the Opposition. In the fever of
the moment we even forgot to
enquire if he had been successful
in the last elections. For all we
knew or cared he might not have
saved his nomination fee.

On my mettle with the fate of
the country trembling in my in-
experienced hands, I hurriedly
looked over my political material
and made some split-second deci-
sions.

"Uncle Bill Glover," I yelled,
singling out the only man in the
harbor who owned a codtrap, "you
take Marine and Fisheries."

"Right you are, your honor,"
growled Uncle Bill, loosening his
muffler and hooking a small
squid-jigger bottom up in his
turtle-neck sweater as a badge of
office.

Henry Knight, the mailman,
was a natural for Minister of
Posts and Telegraphs.

Bill Searle was on the local
school board so I made sure of our
school grant by giving him the
Education portfolio. For an ama-
teur I was learning fast. I might
want the school again the follow-
ing year. After all, this political
job mightn't last out the night. I
noticed Bill combing his hair on
the sly and putting up a hand to
straighten a tie that he'd left
home.

I asked the local merchant, Jim
Squires, to be my Minister of
Finance. Jim was pretty hard-
headed about handing out favors

as he had to be to keep his business afloat in those days. At first I had been seriously considering Skipper John Parsons for that job. John was a J.P. and had some little means. But he was a bit too free for watch dog of the Treasury, I figured. He had a delightful habit of turning up at the annual Sunday School picnic with a huge bag of peppermint knobs and scattering them with lavish hand all over the green to be pounced on by cheering youngsters. I saw in my mind's eye John's big, generous hand dipping, not into a bag of candy but into the government chest. I shuddered and Skipper John, J.P. became my new Minister of Justice. He would I knew temper it with mercy.

By this time my ten minutes were just about up according to the dollar watch given to me by the school-youngsters at Christmas. I quickly completed my Cabinet and we lined up the chairs on opposite sides of the House. We had some difficulty in getting the members seated. Two members of the Opposition had already bummed a pipeful of Edgeworth tobacco each from my Minister of Finance and my own Posts and Telegraphs was badgering him for money to buy a new leader for his dog team. Trying to live up to his new important role in the national economy, Jim had temporarily thrown off his strict business habits. He was promising loans, squaring accounts and generally heading straight for bankruptcy when the Speaker of the House, tall, slim Peter Courtney the tidewaiter, called the House to order. And

high time too. He just saved Posts and Telegraphs from giving away his job as mailman to Opposition member Joe Bursey who had been doggedly, but unsuccessfully sending in tenders for it to the government for the past ten years.

I rescued my cabinet and we squared away for debate. Leader of the Opposition started off with a blistering attack on my government's agricultural policy, especially taking us to task for the bad seed potatoes we had distributed the previous spring. The pent-up resentment of months was in his speech and we had to sit and take it. Imagine my horror and consternation when I heard my Minister of Agriculture and Mines joining loudly in the hear, hears of approval. Big Jake Carroll had forgotten that that was his responsibility. He was remembering only the poor potato crop and the canker in the government imported spuds that had caused it. I hurriedly scribbled a note and passed it along the line to him. He opened it and read, "Jim, shut your big mouth. In a few minutes you have to get up and answer that rat satisfactorily or your job is gone and you'll be back with an old black punt and a killick, trawling tomcods." That fixed the hear, hears from him. He got up in his turn and did a masterly job of justification for himself and us in his maiden speech, making up in vehemence what he lacked in logic. The Speaker had quite a job getting him to speak of his attacker as "my honorable opponent". Jim had some more colorful adjectives thought up and his cabinet colleagues were contributing others to him freely in loud

whispers. But I was agreeably surprised by his political astuteness. He succeeded in shifting all the blame for the poor seed across the Gulf onto the Prince Edward Islanders.

"How was I to know", thundered Agriculture and Mines, "that our order for good seed potatoes was going to turn out like that? I put in four barrels myself and you all know what I got out in the fall. Just enough to feed one small pig till Old Christmas Day. When I killed 'un he was so lean I had to go to the Minister of Finance there and buy good salt pork to fry 'un in. Didn't I Jim?" This dire reversal of fortune enlisted the heart-felt sympathy of both sides of the House and Jake sat down, a martyr to Newfoundland Agriculture, with his skin-booted feet fixed firmly on the first rung of the political ladder.

Foiled in their first dastardly attempt on us the Opposition rallied their forces and attacked next our most vulnerable ministry, Fisheries. Uncle Bill Glover's face was getting redder and redder I noticed as he winced under the barrage of sarcasm and invective hurled against his department. His bonus scheme on vessel-building, the cull on fish, the bad drying weather — it was all blamed on poor old Uncle Bill and my heart bled for the honest old sea-dog who was getting hotter under the collar all the time. Two of my non-cabinet men were so overcome by the eloquence of the Opposition that they tried to cross the House. We yanked them back to the Tory bench after a miniature tug of war with our gleeful opponents

and the debate went on. I tried to catch Uncle Bill's eye to give him a heartening wink but couldn't as he was trying to shed his big home-knit turtle-neck sweater with his pipe still in his mouth. Justice was helping him but some hot ashes had fallen into the sweater and it was beginning to smoulder. All political differences were forgotten and the Speaker hurriedly called a recess until we could put out the fire in our Fisheries Department.

My Finance Minister took advantage of the diversion to confer with his Prime Minister, meaning me.

"Suppose they ask me to bring down the budget?" he queried nervously.

"Bring it down," I said "It has to come down sometime. Might as well be tonight. Here, wait a minute. I'll scratch down a few figures on the back of this old school bill."

I hurriedly concocted some figures giving Education a princely sum and earmarking it plainly for teachers' salaries.

"Better let the other ministers see this before the House resumes sittings," I cautioned. After all it would never do to have my own Ministers arguing about the budget after it was read and saying they'd never seen it before. I wanted to limit the argument if possible to what would come from the other side. Next I had a few words with Uncle Bill Glover and gave him a few points on answering the attack on fisheries. Uncle Bill's sterling qualities were not what was needed in this game of

mental gymnastics, and I knew his defence would not be a strong one. Suddenly, I heard my Agriculture Minister arguing hotly with Jim Squires, the merchant.

"Look here, Mr. Squires, I want another \$100,000.00 to try out better breeds in sheep and cows. It's nothing out of your pocket."

Jim grinned. He was beginning to enjoy this. He had had to turn down Jake's request for \$25.00 credit in his store the day before and it tickled him to hear Jake talking in the hundred thousands. He rubbed his chin reflectively.

"Well, Jake, I don't know. I might let you have \$50,000.00 or so but I'll have to take it off somewhere else. Guess it'll have to come off Education. You know you didn't have that much to spend last year."

It was Jake's turn to laugh. "You should know. When I squared my account you didn't leave me much to spend."

After the House re-opened Uncle Bill handled the debate on Fisheries rather lamely and then we brought down the budget. Sniping from the Opposition couldn't have been more intense if the figures had been real.

Criticizing the fishery estimates one of our opponents wanted to know if there was anything in them provided for a "groaner" (bell-buoy) on Jerry's Rock just around the point of the harbor.

"That sunker is dangerous," he emphasized, "I've struck my boat's skig there more than once."

Public Works came in for a flood of requests and Jim Squires had to keep revising his figures

for that department to take care of wells, bridges and wharves. He had to get the loan of another stub of pencil from Posts and Telegraphs and the original budget made out on my used school bill had spread to cover a page torn from the Lodge minute book (the last one), the backs of 4 fish receipts (contributed by Finance) and an old Custom entry form (donated by the Opposition Leader).

It was 12 o'clock by the time we had all our paper used up and that was too late to start on the Dog Act although the Minister of Agriculture who had 3 sheep killed by Posts and Telegraph's mail-dogs, threatened to resign unless something was done. He was mollified by the promise of a job as messenger boy for his son as soon as the post became vacant and everybody heaved a sigh of relief. We were all exhausted physically and mentally. In my closing speech I struck a serious note for education, pointing out that every Newfoundland child should have the chance to be thoroughly equipped to discuss public matters intelligently and that I was sure the night's experience had proven this to be no easy accomplishment. (Hear, hears from exhausted statesmen on both sides of the House). We closed by singing "God Save the King" and I crossed the House to shake hands with the Leader of the Opposition. I asked him what his views were on Coalition Government. Mopping his brow he answered that he could see certain advantages over the two-party system and it might be worth trying sometime.

NEWFOUNDLANDERS ABROAD - 23rd in a series



by ADELAIDE LEITCH

NEWFOUNDLAND will have a chance to hear one of its own stars-of-the-future this summer when pretty and petite Roma Butler comes home to sing in St. John's. Currently, the 19-year-old Newfoundlander is busy carving out a career for herself in music—and making a notable success of it already—at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

She can talk with authority on a cantata, a fugue, an oratorio, or why she likes a certain arrangement, as glibly as most young people can describe the latest

ROMA BUTLER Singing Star

movie. Her days—and sometimes her nights or part of them—are filled with music, music, music, spread over such matters as the history of music, harmony, keyboard harmony, theory—not to mention a full schedule of lectures by some of Toronto's top musicians. (The list includes Sir Ernest MacMillan, conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra..)

But don't let the weighty studies fool you! She's just as pretty as a picture and much more vivacious! She's also one young lady completely sold on her career.

Hard Work But She Loves It

"It's a lot of hard work and I love it!" she told *Atlantic Guardian* — hastily adding that she wouldn't encourage any one else to try it unless they were equally in love with it. While it is wonderful it is hard work—and sometimes disappointing work.

Take the Opera Festival for instance.

She and other young Canadians from all across the Dominion practiced literally night and day for weeks before the opening of this Second Opera Festival of the Royal Conservatory Opera Company. They went to special rehearsals at all hours, they had fittings for their costumes, grabbed hasty lunches and went back happily for more rehearsals.

Roma had her parts note-perfect in the "Marriage of Figaro" and "Madame Butterfly," but she saw the curtain rise on only two performances, before the 'flu bug bit. She spent the rest of the week in bed, reading press notices and hearing about it second hand!

This young Newfoundlander is already a veteran in radio. Last December, she was featured on Borden's "Canadian Cavalcade" on the Trans-Canada network of the C.B.C. With her were the Leslie Bell Singers to present a Newfoundland medley.

Before Christmas, an audition for a French-Canadian program,

"Nos Futures Etoiles) (Our Future Stars), was piped through from Toronto to the Quebec sponsors. Her guardian angel pulled a boner that time too and the November 19th broadcasting date had to be cancelled — laringitis, this time. But she connected later on, for March 4th, to sing two widely different songs—"O Mio Fernando" and the beloved and familiar 'Annie Laurie'.

Because really good singing seems so effortless, the general public at times has a pretty foggy idea what a career in it is all about. Every so often some one says consolingly—"Oh, so you sing . . . That's nice, isn't it . . . Uh—what else do you do?"

"But there isn't time for anything else!" Roma gasps.

The daughter of music-loving parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tom G. Butler, Roma began to be interested in music about the time she began to be interested in anything. Later, when a young sister, Janice, came along, she too began to show interest in the same direction — and still does.

Main Interest Concert Work

For three years Roma studied with Helen Oates in St. John's, before coming to Toronto in 1948. At the Conservatory, she is taking the Scholarship Course in Senior School—with two more years to go before graduation. This year, her main interest is in concert work and in the leader classes which concentrate on the German composers and the songs of Brahms, Schumann and Schubert.

After graduation — radio, con-

cert and teaching says Roma, and she would like to teach in St. John's.

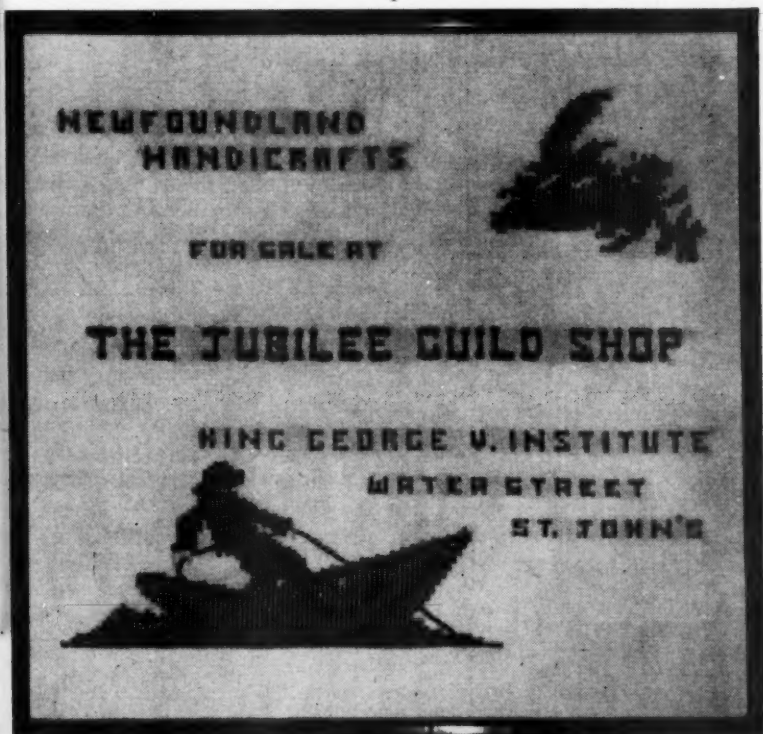
Newfoundland had a preview of her work last summer when she came home to give concerts in Pitt's Memorial Hall in St. John's and the theatre in Corner Brook. She'll be back on the island again this summer, bringing with her another Toronto Conservatory student, Feggie Shiff, who is also making a name for herself as a composer.

Chances are that there will be some Newfoundland songs on the program.

"I think we have some of the

loveliest ones ever written," says Roma, a fervent Newfoundlander. Her own favorites are not so much the rollicking sea shanties that mainland Canada associates with Newfoundland, but lovely old ones like, "She's Like the Swallow" and "Soldier, Soldier, Will You Marry Me?" These two, incidentally, are her favorites.

If you see a pretty, young Newfoundlander walking along Water Street this summer with some music under her arm, chances are that's Roma Butler. And if she looks somehow familiar—well she was cover girl for Atlantic Guardian last January!





The Beaches Are Coming to Life

by DON W. S. RYAN

THE beaches are coming to life!

There's activity everywhere around our coastline. Fishermen are "gettin' t' rights" for the salmon, the lobster, and the cod.

And there's an ocean of work to be done.

The old skiff needs a thorough overhauling after a season of exposure to the rain and the snow.

The seams need caulking, the bottom needs a good tarring, and the sides a coating or two of paint.

Or the bow "gunnel" where the lines are hauled mostly needs a new section, and the keel requires attention where it's scarfed.

There are killicks also to be made. These man-made wooden grapples, seen in the foreground of the picture, are sure grips for

the traps and the nets during the heavy tides and storms.

New oars too have to be planed out from a stick of seasoned spruce, thole-pins to be pointed out, and ropes to be spliced.

Fishermen here in this cove, a few miles in the Bay from Cabot's landfall, are busy getting their boat ready for the cod fishery.

They have taken in their salmon nets and have spread them on the beach to dry. For the next few weeks they will use their motor boat instead of their row boat and are now busy giving its bottom a good watertight tarring so that the piggon can remain relatively idle in the dell.

They've also taken out their splitting table. But this spring they have no repairs to make to their stages. They've had none these past few years.

Fishing stages and flakes are absent from the picture. That accounts for the splitting table on the beach.

A few years ago stages and flakes lined the waterfront in the cove but late one October night in 1947 a furious storm blew up from the North and by noon the next day had left only one stage standing, and that one in a shattered condition.

The whole waterfront was swept clean by the receding seas which rolled farther up the beaches than ever before in living memory.

Discouraged by fish prices these past few years the fishermen here have not tackled the job of building up their stages and flakes and unless the future of the fisheries brightens the cove will have an atmosphere of half-hearted activity.

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THE BRIDGE

(Continued from Page 20)

alry thundered past and disappeared up the road. There were only a score or so, but they kicked up as much dust as a hundred.

While the horses for some reason high-tailed over the planking the cows, on the contrary, soaked along as if ready to stop at any moment and spit over the railing and inquire what luck with the fish. The dogs, of course, lived at our heels—swimming, climbing, boating, racing with us—and though they couldn't fish they sat with pricked ears eyeing the trout in the water and jumped up to add their barks to our shouts when someone landed a whopper. There were no purebred Newfoundlanders in our place, but most of the dogs were large, many at home in the water, and all willing in harness—and hardly a boy but who had one for his very own.

Coming into the fall the bridge, which had been safe as a cradle all summer, brought high adventure riding in from the ocean on the whipping gales. Running the gantlet of the big waves that pounded the daylight out of the pilings got to be quite a contest with us small traffic on the way to school. The horse-maned breakers struck stantwise and foamed along the bulkhead in series of threes, smothering the road with spray. A fleet boy tailing the last wave could make the grade in the lull between series; those who failed got drenched to the skin. Crossing the opposite way was harder still, of course, but even at that a long-legged

runner could win against the stinging drift. Anyway, it was a thrilling game—and the boy who finished the day bone dry had something to brag about.

But it wasn't until the advent of the railway in our place, about 1911, that the bridge began really to rub hands with every single soul in the village. The grand attraction now was the trains rumbling over the trestle that spanned the river mouth, and for this the bridge was the frontest of seats. Really important people, like ministers and merchants, who once wouldn't deign to stop to tie a shoelace among us commoners loafing on the planking now swallowed their pride to lean on the railings and gawk across the Tongue like the rest of us. The engine puffing over the trestle was a wonderful thing for anyone to see and hear.

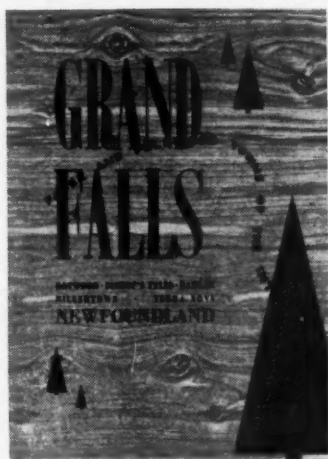
We boys even dropped our trouting to watch the magic of train smoke billowing over the tree tops and to make a game out of counting the passengers silhouetted through the car windows as the train whizzed by. Already our tongues were flip with bristly new phrases such as "All afire—three holes!" and "Baby engine number one" picked up from the construction gangs. When we foot-raced now we made puff-puff noises like the steam engine instead of the old-fashioned whinnies of the horses, and even the work dogs seemed to pant like the train. The whole village fell into step with the railway—with the bridge, as usual, carrying the flag.

So in view of all the entertainment the bridge afforded in the

good months, it seemed only fair we should let it share in the fun of our fall finale—the official wind-up of the outdoor season before the onset of winter. This was Bonfire Night, November 5th, and the celebration was held in the clearing nearby. Here we built a huge bonfire of tar and blubber barrels and anything else that would make a big flame, and whooped and hollered in a circle around it like a passle of savages. Everyone who could creep or crawl joined in the festivities, which commemorated some political event or other in the dim past of our forefathers' England, and gave the bridge its biggest crowd of the year.

It was a grand send-off. The flames lighted up the whole Tongue and made a regular wall picture out of the bottom of the harbor, especially when the blaze shot sky-high and etched the bridge sharply in rose and orange on its curtain of coal-black water. Spectral faces floated in and out of the rim of light, like a ring around the moon, as spectators moved close to watch the blaze, then fell back out of the path of the flankers when the cone of flaming tar barrels toppled like a house afire. The bridge now rumbled with a new kind of traffic and echoed with the loudest cheers of the year as our shadowy figures, darting in and out of the circle like millers around a lantern, trundled empty casks hollowly over the planking to heap on the fire. We worked like slaves for hours and hours and dragged home at midnight as black with soot as the pile of ashes the morning after.

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Following the bonfire the bridge was left to shift for itself for a spurt, and it must have felt lonesome indeed. The trout gone, the boats beached, the horses corralled, the cattle stabled, the children in school for most of the daylight, there was nothing but the plunk of business traffic over the walk. Frosty wet fog seeped around the cold damp ballast rocks and wharfsticks, and blobs of slob ice snatched from the shores of the Tongue by the tide nosed against the bulkheads and clung to the kelpy whiskers on the pilings, presaging the grip of winter. Now the evenings closed in fast over the planking and "the nights were dark and stormy and the wind was howling wild".

But there was always another spring, of course, with the birds grubbing oats again, the sparky toes of the horses, the pan-hopping, the new boats and the hungry big trout; and then the long summer of play under and on the timbers and around the wharf, with the marches and stampedes and all the other things, and the big bonfire to top it all off in the fall.

The activities related in this brief history are really not much more than a hint of the numerous pastimes our bridge provided, as can well be imagined when a group of village youngsters are fancy-free to frolic in such a spot. But the point is, there are many such playgrounds today for which the boys and girls would stand up and cheer just as loudly as I have done for the bridge. For there never was an outpost yet that didn't have some such place its children will always recall.

ATLANTIC GUARDIAN

AN ARTIST IN Newfoundland

by PHIL SHACKLETON

FREDERICK STEIGER began his training as an artist by painting displays for a Saskatoon movie house. When I first met him he had just finished a display for another theatre, this one in Ottawa. But it was for old time's sake. Upstairs in the lobby his first collection of Newfoundland paintings were on exhibition.

To fill time between portrait commissions, he was putting with poster paints in the theatre basement. While upstairs Ottawa critics were admiring his oils and endorsing the artist, hailed as the first to create noteworthy work from the Newfoundland scene.

The Newfoundland landscape collection, which he painted in the summer of 1949, has attracted wide interest and favorable criticism wherever shown. In St. John's, at the Newfoundland Industries and Trade Fair, the islanders themselves endorsed Steiger and agreed that he had caught the spirit of the rugged land and its rugged people.

The 48-year old painter, who is well on the way to becoming the island's artist laureate, has spent the last two summers in Newfoundland. The second time he went back with a commission to paint all the speakers of the Newfoundland House, running back to the early 1800's. The commission came from the Newfoundland provincial government. Since only



FREDERICK STEIGER

two of the speakers are still living, Steiger has had to work largely from old photographs.

But it's landscape painting that really interests Steiger. His bread and butter continues to come from portrait work but he spends as much time as possible on the wharves and the outposts of Newfoundland, painting the maritime life that so greatly appeals to his painter's eye.

Steiger is Czech born and a conscript veteran of the Austrian Army in the first World War. After the war he lost little time in making tracks for a more peaceful part of the world, and he landed in Saskatoon in 1921. The English he learned at high school and university in Vienna was enough to pass him, and his first job in Canada was a \$15 a week stint as clerk in a clothing store.

Somehow he started drawing posters in his spare time. When fed up with clerking, he applied

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for work as a sign painter. The next week he was painting and lettering displays for a Saskatoon theatre.

Still without any formal training, he went on to commercial artwork for Saskatoon stores. Later his clever posters and advertising work won such acclaim that he was tempted to try portrait work.

These were depression years and the portraits he painted reflected the shaken economy of the prairies. One of his paintings to receive wide acclaim was "Drouth", a portrait of a prairie farmer. At that time it might well have been a portrait of the province of Saskatchewan.

Steiger feels and thinks through his eyes. The faces in his early portraits always told a graphic story. Like many artists, he doesn't express himself well in words, but he has a tremendous craving and ability to express himself on canvas.

Saskatoon took her adopted son to her heart. In a province where few artists have felt inspiration, Steiger was a bright light. And although he made little money he did make friends and a respected reputation.

In 1941, fire destroyed his studio and most of his paintings. Within a few days, a clergyman and an MP began a collection to re-establish the artist and contributions flowed in from all parts of Canada.

"I'd meet a friend on the street," says Steiger. "We'd talk a while and then he'd go on. Later I'd discover a dollar bill in one of my pockets."

"My friends seemed to take the fire harder than I, but it helped



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me realize I was in a rut and gave me opportunity to break away from my early style of painting. I decided I had to get away from Saskatchewan and begin my work elsewhere."

Steiger went back to commercial artwork, this time with the T. Eaton Company in Toronto. After saving enough to start out on his own again, he opened a Toronto studio and began taking portrait commissions.

Even now, Steiger makes his living from portraits. "But doing portraits on commission," he complains, "leaves the artist little freedom. People who want portraits are looking for a clear, flattering reproduction of themselves. Hard lines and shadows are out."

Between commissions Steiger paints for himself. He has broken from his early style and has gone over to landscape work. In the summer of '49 he packed easel and paint tubes and went to Newfoundland. There, he felt, he could paint country that few artists had tried.

For three months he wandered from outpost to outpost. In villages like Old Perlican, Bay de Verde, Caplin Cove and Western Bay he stopped to record Newfoundland life and landscape as he saw it.

Sometimes the fishermen and their families were suspicious. In recent years, newspapermen thirsting for unusual stories, have taken advantage of them. But Steiger's sincerity and his eagerness to pay models for posing won the villagers over.

The artist was a novelty to the outpost fishermen. Few had met

an artist before and wherever he went a crowd gathered. Although reserved at first, an old fisherman would watch his brush strokes in silence for a long period and then quietly comment, "He certainly can do it".

"Once I got to know the people of a village," says Steiger, "they were always most co-operative. Sometimes too I lived and boarded with them for days. Life is leisurely there, unspoiled by commercialism. And the approval these people gave my paintings means more to me than that of the professional critics."

Little art finds its way into the lives of Newfoundland fishermen. With minds uncluttered by half remembered writings of art critics, they made candid, honest comments on Steiger's work. "They could approach, appreciate and criticize a painting in a fashion that was both naive and competent."

The climax of his first Newfoundland trip was a portrait sitting with Premier Joseph Smallwood. "During my first interview, Smallwood did a tremendous amount of work. While I was sitting there he had a phone conversation with a police chief, decided policies with the minister of finance and attended to a batch of correspondence."

The dynamic premier referred to the sittings as Steiger's "gentle tyranny" but when the portrait was done he asked him for a price on painting portraits of all the speakers. Steiger quoted a figure and promptly forgot about it. But next time he met Smallwood the deal was firmed and so the artist made his second trip to New-

foundland the following summer.

First shown in St. John's, the first summer's canvases have since been exhibited in the Odeon Theatre art circuit. But more important to Steiger than the mainland critics' comments are those of the people of Newfoundland.

When the paintings were shown there, a St. John's columnist wrote that Newfoundlanders would need no guide or interpreter at this exhibition. "The pictures are so close to the people and character of Newfoundland that I'm sure nobody needs to have anything told them."

Steiger is one of those artists who looks the part. Long black hair creeps over the collar of his sport shirt and only on very special occasions does he wear a tie. A sports jacket is his major concession to formality. His strong brown face would be a wonderful subject for another artist, and Steiger has done several self-portraits, one of which resembles a villainous Spaniard.

His constant refusal to fret over the economic concerns of life account for the face which appears 10 years younger than the age he claims.

A painter who becomes entirely absorbed in his work, Steiger, according to his friends, has been known during the course of a painting to rip pieces from his

trousers to use as paint rags.

A self-schooled painter, he is also an accomplished self-taught pianist and an authority on symphony. On the other hand, he is said to be helpless in a kitchen even when cans and can opener are placed before him.

In Saskatoon he wore a long black coat and a black hat. Together with his flat-footed walk, these did nothing to make him an inconspicuous figure. A number of children passed him on the street one day and as he walked by one of them whispered, "Hey, look. There goes the Shadow".

While still in Saskatoon, his work was shown by the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy. His earliest recognition came from the foremost art magazine in Austria during the thirties. The critic felt that he emerged as one of the first North American artists to make a successful combination of two schools which had been thought irreconcilable. The academic and the ultra-modern traditions merge in Steiger's work.

One of his early portraits entitled "Saskatchewan" has been featured in a number of Saskatchewan government publications and another has been used by the Canadian Welfare Council.

But Steiger considers his early portraits amateurish. When I quoted some of the artist's comments from old newspaper clippings Steiger exclaimed in horror, "Did I say that?"

Today, Steiger's heart belongs to Newfoundland. "If it were possible to make a living painting there," he says, "I'd move to Newfie for good."

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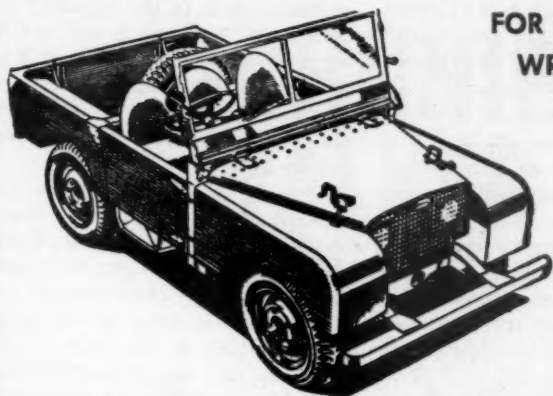
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CATALINA

by HEBER COLE

ALL that has been said in prose and poetry about the rugged windswept beauty of Newfoundland has not been merely the prejudiced musings of its patriots, who would wish the whole world to see the country as they see it. A true picture of historic spots of Newfoundland has been painted, and the country merits the elaborations.

Take Catalina, for example.

It is a recognized fact that the first inhabitants of Newfoundland settled at Catalina. In fact it is believed that Catalina was one of the first important fishing settlements. It is even said that it was named after John Cabot's wife, Cataline.

Catalina grew into one of the busiest of fishing stations shortly after the island was colonized by England. It was only fifty years ago that the fishing enterprise began to decline there. At that time there was a large Labrador and Bank fishery carried on by schooners and their crews setting sail from Catalina each year, as well as vast numbers of inshore fishermen.

Those large business firms such as Snelgrove's, etc., have long gone out of the picture, and in their stead we find such progressing firms as S. W. Miffin Ltd., Murphy's, and S. W. Elliott. These firms carry on extensive fish businesses, but the bank fishery and the Labrador fishery are long discontinued from Catalina.

The port of Catalina is situated some sixty-five miles north of St.

John's. Along the 100 miles of the east coast of the island it affords a safe anchorage for sailing vessels on the way from the extreme north to the capital.

It is not unusual to see twenty or more of these ships of all sizes at anchor in the commodious harbor awaiting favorable winds to take them to their various destinations.

Catalina is within a mile or two of some of the best trouting ponds on the Bonavista peninsula, where huge trout, from eight to twelve inches long, are often caught. In springtime, looking down from the high hills at the back of the town one can see a beautiful picture. There before us are multi-colored trees, and purple barren mounds, intermingled with the silvery brightness of myriads of little ponds and brooks. Between this color display and the blue of the eastern sky are the homes of the town marked out in plots or gardens with neat white fences. Here and there a church spire points heavenward, for Catalina is favored with three churches, adequate schools and several society halls. The blue-gray waters of the harbor, dotted here and there with schooners and fishing boats, and coastal boats plying in and out lend a perfect background to the picture.

Catalina is served by the Canadian National Railway and the Cabot Highway which passes through the town, connecting it with other towns and with the capital.

All dry codfish produced on the peninsula is exported from Catalina and Port Union which is the South West Arm of Catalina.

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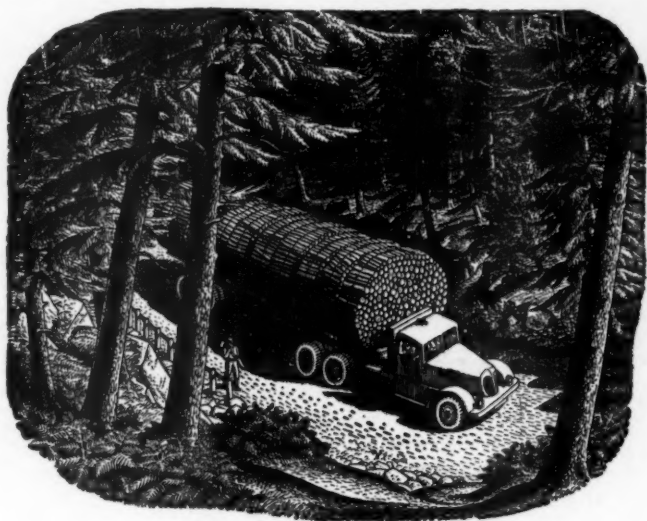
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